

MATWATCH

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VOL. 4, NO. 6

FEB. 11-17

THIS WEEK'S

HEADLINES

WWF TONED DOWN ACT BEFORE NBC: VARIETY

NEW YORK----Weekly VARIETY is reporting the World Wrestling Federation toned down its plans for the Feb. 1 THE MAIN EVENT special before being asked to by NBC.

VARIETY writer Michael Fleming, in the Feb. 4 edition, confirmed the WWF's original plan "was supposed to include a struggle over the American flag."

According to Fleming: "NBC didn't have to insist that the WWF tone down the controversy ...although the network was ready to, per a spokesman." Responded the WWF's Steve Plamanta: "We don't want to offend anyone. We're trying to entertain."

HERD: "DUSTY ADDS EXTRA DIMENSION"

ATLANTA----Despite critical pans from virtually every wrestling newsletter, World Championship Wrestling chief Jim Herd says Dusty Rhodes "adds an extra dimension" as a color commentator.

Rhodes made his color debut on the Jan. 30 CLASH OF THE CHAMPIONS XIV on TBS. Reviewers were critical of Rhodes' dominating the mike.

But Herd told MATWATCH Thursday: "If our other announcers would spend as much time trying to get the guys over as he (Dusty) does, we'd be a lot better off, rather than them going for the cute line."

L.O.D.'S ZUBAZ RAKES \$20 MILLION: FORBES

NEW YORK----Zubaz pants, chief product for Warrior Distributing Corp., owned by Legion of Doom Joe Hegstrand and Mike Laurinidas, will gross \$20 million this year, according to FORBES magazine.

FORBES writer Vicki Contavespi details the Road Warriors' fortunes in the Feb. 18 edition. More details on page 6.

The Main Event Posts All-Time Low

AMERICA SHRUGS

It could be worse than the level of taste of the WWF's current lead storyline. Moreover, it could be a turning point for the future of pro wrestling on network television.

The Feb. 1 NBC special THE MAIN EVENT scored the lowest rating and share ever for a WWF broadcast on the network. TME drew fewer than a third of the viewers who watched the first prime-time MAIN EVENT in 1988.



Steve

Beverly

Hot on the heels of the weak ratings performance of TBS' CLASH OF THE CHAMPIONS XIV two nights earlier (3.9 rating/5.8 per cent share), the NBC numbers for TME cannot spell a positive future at least for the ring in prime time during a rating sweeps period.

THE MAIN EVENT registered a 6.7 rating and 11 per cent share of audience for its 8-9 p.m. (EST) slot.

It was seen in only 6.2 million homes (compared to the 13.9 million for the Hogan-Andre 1988 TME premiere). The Sgt. Slaughter-Jim Duggan-led hour was viewed by only 10.6 million people, compared to 33.2 million three years ago.

Even with Hulk Hogan as Captain America, TME finished 74th out of 87 network shows for the week ending Feb. 3. In its time period, ABC's FULL HOUSE (17/29, 10th-ranked) and FAMILY MATTERS (17.4/29, 9th) dominated, proving Steve Urkel has far stronger appeal than balding wrestling champions. Even the limp CBS western GUNS OF PARADISE (9.2/16, 55th) outpointed TME.

The week before, NBC fared better (6.9) with the WORLD PRO FIGURE SKATING CHAMPIONSHIPS and Jan. 18, the Peacock net scored an 8.5/14 on Friday at 8. So, how does one analyze all of this?

First, the rating "sweep" is a four-week period during which all local TV markets are surveyed for audience levels. Those ratings determine how much the stations can charge for advertising over the next three months and February is the heaviest-viewed of the four sweep periods per year. NBC affiliates will not be happy with these numbers and station managers will likely pressure the network not to do another wrestling show in prime time.

Second, the 6.7 score was only marginally affected by THE MAIN EVENT's pre-emption in Los Angeles for live news coverage of a U.S. Air plane crash. Even if TME had drawn an unlikely 10 rating in L.A., where FULL HOUSE/FAMILY MATTERS are wildly popular, the national number would only have risen to 7.1.

Third, for the second straight week, NBC---the ratings champ the last five years---finished third in the weekly Nielsens and THE MAIN EVENT performed the weakest of the three already-lackluster hours on Friday night for the network. That doesn't leave Vince McMahon with much leverage at contract-renewal time. Here's the kicker: the 6.7 was poorer than any SATURDAY NIGHT'S MAIN EVENT has ever performed (7.4 being the lowest in September).

Does this mean the public is registering a big "no" vote to the Slaughter-as-Iraqi angle? My answer may surprise you. But I don't feel the rating was more than marginally affected by the storyline's controversy.

Conversely, I think America is speaking in much broader terms. When you add THE MAIN EVENT's performance in the same week as that of the CLASH, I

(Continued on Page 6)

MATWATCH

Page 2

Vol. 4, No. 6/Feb. 11-17



(EDITOR'S NOTE: An abundance of mail has come in on the Slaughter-Iraqi angle. The split is about 3-to-2 against Titan. Here's a sample.)

As a man of draftable age, I must admit Titan's exploitation of the Gulf War is disgusting. Wrestling, as an entertainment entity, has rarely repulsed me. There have been isolated incidents, of course, and, upon reflection, I realize that all have been in the WWF...At the SURVIVOR SERIES, by chance, I bumped into an old friend from high school who had entered the Army right after graduation. He was on leave from his base in upstate New York and decided to attend the show. I'm sorry to say that Thanksgiving night may end up being the last time I see him. For Vince McMahon to exploit death, war and national uneasiness for a quick buck (okay, millions) makes me embarrassed to be a wrestling fan.

BILL STRONG
BRISTOL CT

Having Sgt. Slaughter win the title and defend it against Hogan doesn't really upset me. Or, at least it wouldn't, if Slaughter would refrain from mentioning Saddam Hussein or showing respect for the Iraqi flag. My repulsion for Vince McMahon results from his mammoth ego. It seems Vince gets perverse pleasure from making his wrestlers do things they don't want to do, and twisting the emotions of wrestling fans as if they were clay. Hulk Hogan is the only wrestler in the 1980s who had more popularity than Sgt. Slaughter. Obviously, if Slaughter is allowed to return to the WWF, he must assume a role that destroys his popularity and replaces it with dignity in doses such as the Red Rooster enjoyed. This is what repulses me. Therefore, I am so proud of Bob Backlund. He refused to do the unacceptable and become hated, and I am sad his principles have been so costly to him.

RONALD DOBRATZ
ROSCOE IL

I believe that Slaughter believes in America. I think McMahon's millions have put stars in Slaughter's eyes. Slaughter would say anything McMahon tells him to. If anyone thinks the words Slaughter speaks are from his mind, they're not. They're straight from McMahon. That's what Slaughter gets for rejoining the WWF circus.

PAUL ESNER
STATEN ISLAND NY

This is the most reprehensible stunt McMahon has pulled. There is now a complete WWF boycott in my household; no TV is allowed to be tuned in to a WWF broadcast and I will not give McMahon one red cent.

KEVIN WADDELL
BALTIMORE MD

If I don't like your newsletter, I won't buy it. If

people are as put off and offended as you are by this angle, then they won't buy it. They won't go to L.A. and pay \$30 for something they find in bad taste. Wrestling is not a sport; it is a business and in business, it is the market which decides---not you, Dave Meltzer or Wade Keller.

I hope you follow this up and get on WCW for bringing back Ranger Ross and USWA for the Jarrett "America the Beautiful" video. And didn't WCW have a wrestler billed as Sheik Ali Shikar on TV recently?

PATRICK JONES
MAYFIELD VILLAGE OH

(FSB: Yes and thankfully, even though he was a jobber, he has been, for now, phased out. As we editorialized last week, I am also opposed to the heavy emphasis on the WAR element of the WCW WRESTLE WAR promos. You are very right about the marketplace making the decision and the 6.7 rating for THE MAIN EVENT may be one of those decisions.)

I think Mr. McMahon is tying a ribbon around his federation with the Slaughter angle. The critics will claw at his ribbon and declare it a green ribbon. Is McMahon's patriotism insincere? Is Hulk Hogan's concern for the U.S. troops insincere? My answer is no. I agree Terry Bollea should have made the USO trips rather than Hulk Hogan. If Hulk and Vince are doing their little bit for the troops, can't you look past the \$30-40 million? Hulk America will defeat Sgt. Hussein and the 24-inch pythons will wave old glory in L.A. This scene will tie a yellow ribbon around the WWF.

KEVIN DONLAN
PASADENA MD

(FSB: And if Tony Orlando is announced as a WW7 celebrity, I will agree with you to the max, Kevin.)

I'm loving all of this---seeing how you and Meltzer and THE NATIONAL have blown the lid off the WWF p.r. machine. Vince has made his wad in the last eight years and he's also hurt a lot of people in the process. It's about time one of the Million \$ Man's bucks was stuffed in his mouth.

BRENT GRIFFITH
CINCINNATI OH

Can't you just accept that it's all wrestling? I'm sorry you lost your friend in Vietnam and I'm sorry all of these families are hurting because their relatives are in the Persian Gulf. But the Slaughter angle is just wrestling.

CARL TRIMMONDS
FRESNO CA

I live in Gainesville, Florida, where we've all lived in fear since the murders of several college coeds last year. If Vince McMahon would stoop as low as he has with this Iraqi angle, I wonder what's next? Will he create a character called THE LADYKILLER from Gainesville and have Hulk Hogan take a knife out of his hand? Wouldn't surprise me.

JEFF O'CONNELL
GAINESVILLE FL

(More letters on Page 6.)

MATWATCH

Page 3

Vol. 4, No. 6/Feb. 11-17



(WWF/USA) - [PRIME TIME]:

{WWF TAG TITLE} Hart Foundation d. Orient Express to retain belts; (UPDATE) Sgt. Slaughter on Hulk Hogan challenge; Nasty Boys d. Reno Riggins/Mike Williams; (REPLAY) Ted DiBisce-Virgil split; Tugboat d. Joe Turner; (Prom NBC/WWF WORLD TITLE) Jim Duggan d. Slaughter by DQ when Sarge uses chair; Mountie d. Tom King; Demolition d. Pez Whatley/Mike Wallace; Tito Santana d. Koko B. Ware; (6-MAN) Legion of Doom/Davey Boy Smith double DQ vs. Warlord/Power & Glory; (I-C TITLE) Kerry Von Erich d. Curt Hennig by countout when Curt goes out after Bossman. Curt retains belt; Shane Douglas d. Dale Wolfe; Duggan d. Tony Burton. DRAW.

(UWF) - [Replay of 11/19]: Steve Ray d. Riki Ataki; (ANGLE) Col. DeBeers attacks Larry Sampson; Steve Williams d. Steve DeLeon; Bob Orton Jr. d. Calvin Benjamin; (CAPT. CORNER) Albano w. Andre the Giant; Paul Orndorff d. Spittball Patterson but Williams jumps Orndorff; (RECAP) Williams-Orndorff feud; Nikita Koloff vs. Ken Patera in progress at end. BOMB-PLUS.

(USWA/ESPN) - [Premiere]: {TEXAS TITLE TOURNEY} Bill Dundee d. John Tatum when Tessa lures Tatum & Bill rolls him up; Mike Davis draw vs. Billy Travis but Mike advances on coin flip; Gary Young d. Eric Embry; Jeff Jarrett d. Sumo Riki; Steve Austin d. Steven Dane by countout when Travis brawls w. Dane outside; California Stud d. Khris Germany. RESTHOLD.

(WWF/SYN) - [CHALLENGE]: Undertaker d. Scott Allen; Von Erich d. Dale Wolfe; Warlord d. Whatley; Bossman d. Doug Vines; L.O.D. d. Demolition by DQ; (WRESTLEMANIA REPORT). RESTHOLD. [SUPERSTARS]: Koko d. Monty Burke; Hennig d. Whatley; (UPDATE) Hogan-Slaughter; Bossman d. Owen Martin; Slaughter d. Wolfe; Santana d. Ted Oates; Mountie d. Sonny Blaze; (WM REPORT). RESTHOLD.

(LPWA) - Bad, Black & Beautiful d. Moore/Alvarez; Bambi d. Devine; Reggie Bennett d. L.A. Gate; Rush/Michaels/The Beast d. Hosaka/Nasty Girls; Judy Martin/Lelani Kai d. Misty Blue Simmes/Heidi Lee Morgan when Chris Love interferes. RESTHOLD.

(USWA/SYN) - [CHALLENGE]: Dundee d. Dane; Jarrett/Travis d. Mike Davis/Dog of War; Steve Austin/California Stud d. Keith Robertson/Jamie Dundee; Awesome Kong d. Strongman/Dennis Knight. RESTHOLD.

[BEST OF CHAMPIONSHIP]: Jerry Lawler d. Terrence Garvin by

countout. Garvin flees when Lawler tries to snip his hair; Jeff Gaylord/Brian Lee d. T.D. Steel/Freezer Thompson; Jerry Lynn/Cody Michaels d. John Rush/Sgt. O'Reilly; (6-MAN) New Kids/Ben Jordan d. Doug Gilbert/Anthony/O'Reilly by DQ when brawl erupts. RESTHOLD.

(PRO WRESTLING '91) - Fabian d. Mr. Wrestling; Ken Timbs d. Chief Little Lynn; (Prom UCW) Tom Prichard d. Chris Wilson; (CLASSIC/From CWF) Wendell Cooley d. Tony Anthony; Nick Busich d. T.C. Carter; Blazers double DQ vs. Pretty Young Things. RESTHOLD.

(AWA: LOOKING BACK) - [1984]: Dusty Rhodes d. Larry Zbyszko; [1983] Jesse Ventura d. Jake Millman; [1984] The Crusher/Mad Dog Vachon d. Nick Bockwinkel/Blackjack Mulligan. NO RATING.

(IWCCW) - Rick Salvage/Tower of Power d. Mad Russians; Curly

Moe d. Zap; Miami Kid d. Hurricane; Million \$ Babies d. Fortune/Kent; Texas Terminator d. Doug Allen; Undertakers d. Ebony/Ivory. RESTHOLD.

(SOUTH ATLANTIC) -

[1/27]: {SAW TAG TITLE}

Fantastics d. Pit Bulldogs to win belts; Curtis Thompson d. Robert Fuller by DQ; The Maneater d. Tommy Landell; Jackie Fulton/Chris Chavis double countout vs. Pit Bulldogs. DRAW.

[2/3]: {RULING} Frank Dusek returns tag belts to Bulldogs; Chavis/Fulton d. Dan Grundy/Landell; Thompson d. Mike REX; (ANGLE) Vince Torelli accepts offer to join Stud Stable and turns on Paul Jones; Pit Bulls d. Robert Campbell/Butch Malone. BOMB-PLUS.

(WCW/SYN) - [WORLD WIDE]: Michael Wallstreet d. David Isley; Steiners d. Mike Samples/Magnum Force II; Barry Windham d. Ron Simmons when Barry ducks & Butch Reed clotheslines Ron; (6-MAN) Ricky Morton/Tommy Rich/Junkyard Dog d. Master Blasters/Lt. James Earl Wright; Ric Flair d. Mike Hart; Sting/Lex Luger d. Dutch Mantel/Rip Rogers. RESTHOLD.

[WCW PRO]: Simmons d. Rick Cannon; Vicious d. Mike Dibacco; (SULLIVAN'S SALOON) El Gigante says he wants the belt, so Kevin offers him a beer; JYD d. Tom Burke; (WCW TV TITLE) Arn Anderson d. Tom Zenk to regain belt; Sting d. Buddy Landell; (ANGLE) Flair slaps Gigante, so El claws Ric into a choke & no one can remove him; (6-MAN) Brad Armstrong/Terry Taylor/Tim Horner d. Rogers/Kevin Nash/Pat Rose. DRAW.

(WCW/TBS) - [POWER HOUR]: Rich d. John Peterson; Steiners d. Master Blasters but Freebirds jump Steiners after; Vicious d. Todd Galinia; Freebirds d. Armstrong/Pillman; (WNN) Gordon Solie on Zenk-Taylor, Dallas Page-Teddy Long "deal," DOOM d. John Faulkner/Greg Sawyer; Barry Windham d. Carl Robertson; (WCW TV TITLE) Arn d. Zenk to regain belt. RESTHOLD-PLUS.

[WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP]: Luger d. Faulkner; DOOM d. Tommy Angel/Harry Bronson; Steiners d. Italian Stallion/Cruel Connection; Zenk d. Chuck Coats; Freebirds d. Bob Holly/Scott Allen; Rich d. Mark Kyle; (DANGER ZONE) Paul E. w. Flair on Gigante attack; (From WCW PRO) El chokes Flair; (WRAPUP) Solie w. Dusty Rhodes announcing DUSTY RHODES APPRECIATION NIGHT for Great American Bash in July; (SEGMENT) Missy Hyatt w. Taylor when Zenk shows to say Terry "has a problem with Z-Man;" Morton d. Bill Ford; Master Blaster Nash d. Isley; Gigante d. Joe Cezana; (From ALL-JAPAN) Stan Hansen-Big Van Vader; (6-MAN) Vicious/Windham/Anderson d. Armstrong/Horner/Allen Iron Eagle.

RESTHOLD-PLUS.

(USWA/WMC) - [From MID-SOUTH/USWA TAG TITLE] Jerry Lawler/Jeff Jarrett d. Fabulous Ones to win belts but Eddie Gilbert runs in, chases Lawler into seats & with Fabs holding, burns Lawler; (ANGLE) As Lawler give locker room interview, Eddie Marlin has to block Gilbert from busting into Lawler's room; Eric Embry d. Cody Michaels when heel ref Jamie Dundee bumps Cody's foot off ropes; (ANGLE) As Lawler interviews, Eddie flies into him & the 2 brawl to a pullapart; Danny Davis vs. Steve Austin declared no contest by Marlin when ref Jamie keeps talking to Jeannie instead of counting 4 Davis pins; (ANGLE) Marlin fires Jamie but Jamie refuses, claims Max Andrews hired him to ref. They argue until Bill Dundee comes out, tells Jamie he has to quit. Jamie still refuses, so Bill takes Marlin's belt to Jamie, who tells his Daddy, "I hate you!" (ANGLE) As Eddie G. interviews, Lawler sails into him until another pullapart;

SCALE: PINFALL!
Must See. PILED RIVER -
Excellent. POWERSLAM -
Good. DRAW - Average.
RESTHOLD - Fair.
BOMB - Poor. PLUS -
Midscale rating.

MATWATCH

Page 4

Vol. 4, No. 6/Feb. 11-17

New Kids/Bill Dundee d. Brian Lee/Tony Anthony/Doug Gilbert by DQ when 8 heels run-in & sub ref Marlin decked. Anthony/Doug hold Bill for Jamie to whip w. belt; (MID-SOUTH) Chris Walker d. Prichard by DQ when Anthony/Doug run-in but Curtis Thompson saves; (ANGLE) Jeannie Clarke slaps Jarrett after he says Chris Adams should have slapped her. Jeff blocks second slap & Austin/Jeff get into brawl until Steve flees; (6-MAN) U.S. Males/Jarrett d. Eli the Eliminator/Sgt. O'Reilly/Keith Eric. PILEDRIVER...hottest TV show of '91. Must for tape traders.

1. Gene Okerlund/Jesse Ventura, REPOSESED (movie): (GO) "Steroids aren't used in wrestling any more." (JV) "Or any less." 2. Dusty Rhodes, WCW: "My ol' body just wore out. I'm still a young man." 3. Bobby Heenan, PTW, on Jim Neidhart: "He's valet parking at the Bates Motel." 4. Heenan, PTW, on Frankie: "Like that bird? Extra crispy or regular?" 5. Heenan, PTW, on Santana-Koko: "I like a good divorce." 6. Skandor Akbar, ESPN: "You have to give (Khris) Germany a 'g' for guts." 7. Andre the Giant, WWF: "I'm staying in the WWF. Don't worry, Lou." 8. Anonymous, MATWATCH HOTLINE, on A&E Network reruns of THE AVENGERS: "If this were 1962, Honor Blackman would be my Terri Power." 9. Larry Zbyszko, WGN: "El Gigante doesn't deserve a title shot. He ought to be in a home for warthogs." 10. Paul E. Dangerously, PH, on Tommy Rich: "He needs a piece of somebody's mind, 'cause the one he's got ain't working." 11. Tom Prichard, WMC: "Your commentary sounds like it's partly cloudy and about 30 degrees." 12. Bill Dundee, WMC, to son Jamie: "Take off your shirt. Go to work at McDonald's or something." 13. Jerry Lawler, WMC: "Eddie Gilbert reminds me of one of those little weiner dogs that nips at your heels, then runs away." 14. Jeff Jarrett, WMC: "Jeannie, your ex-husband, Chris Adams, should have slapped you side of the head." 15. Rhodes, COACH KURT SHOW: "I'm gonna be rasslin.' I'm the shot, the booster they need. I'm going to be bookin,' but I'm gonna be rasslin,' too."

STRONGEST COMMENTS - 1. Steve Wulf, SPORTS ILLUSTRATED: "Although there was no mention of Iraq by name in the NBC event, Slaughter clearly identified himself with the Iraqi cause when he dared the TV audience to 'form coalitions to stop me'....Good taste?" 2. Jamie Dundee, WMC, to father Bill: "That's why Mama left because everything had to go Bill Dundee's way." 3. Dundee, WMC, to Bill: "I HATE you!" 4. Rhodes, WCW: "I wouldn't say I'm a Frank Gifford or a John Madden or even a God-don Solie. But I think I can give the fans an 'in-sight' based on 21 years in the business." 5. Ross, WCW: "A clothesline is probably the most overused offensive move in the sport today." 6. Solie, WCW: "Now you're getting the optimum in color commentary with Dusty Rhodes."

NICKNAMES OF THE WEEK - 1. THE TEXAS TOILET (Heenan on Kerry). 2. MONSTERS OF THE MAT (Jim Ross on Horsemen).

MODESTY AWARDS - 1. Rhodes, WCW: "I know the wrestling fans want to give back a lot to Dusty Rhodes, the American Dream but they don't HAVE to." 2. Solie, WCW: "A lot of

people call The Omni THE HOUSE THAT RHODES BUILT."

BEST ANGLE - WMC, Bill Dundee taking the strap to son Jamie when he won't quit after playing heel ref.

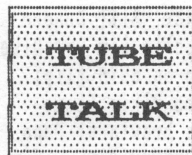
BEST PICTURES - 1. WMC, Bill Dundee-Jamie Dundee angle. 2. WMC, Jamie's revenge angle. 3. WMC, Lawler-Gilbert pullaparts. 4. WCW, Arn firing up Sid. 5. WCW PRO, El Gigante-Flair angle. 6. WCW, Isolated slo-mo of Windham clotheslining Iron Eagle. 7. PTW, Santana-Koko standoff.

ALL-CLICHE TEAM - 1. Rhodes, WCW: "...funky like a monkey." 2. Chris Walker, WMC: "...fight fire with fire."

DREADED GLITCH AWARDS - 1. WMC, for spelling Jeff Jarrett's last name JARRET. 2. WCW PRO, for spelling Tom Burke's name Tom BURK. 3. WCW, for copyright notice All Rights RESERVE.

BLOOPER AWARD - 1. Junkyard Dog, WCW, for "The OMNI." 2. WCW, for Dusty Rhodes-Tully Blanchard match. It was billed from The Omni...but was it not from Greensboro?

BOO AWARDS - 1. WWF, for continuing Hogan-Slaughter story. 2. WCW, for not pulling WRESTLE WAR spots.



Once and for all, there is no WWF special on FOX Feb. 23. I've had callers insist there is. But I've confirmed it through both BROADCASTING and ELECTRONIC MEDIA. No special....Southern Boys now to be known as the Six-Shooters. Dusty has always had a cowboy team....The USWA/WMC show was the liveliest show I've seen since the WCW episode of last year when Luger decked all the Horsemen at the end....Joe Pedicino's GLOBAL stars were profiled Feb. 3 on the new NBC Sunday night series, SUNDAY BEST....Jeff Jarrett is one of the country's best workers but if the USWA goes under, Jeff must learn to interview if he's to make it elsewhere in the U.S. For the second straight week, he offered the most tentative of interviews and appears to have trouble remembering his key points....For Sam Nord and others who have asked, if you want to write Jim Herd or WCW, write to: WCW, One CNN Center, Box 105366, Atlanta GA 30348-5366....WRESTLE WAR will be handled by a new Turner division called Turner Premiere. It will handle all of the WCW pay-per-view wrestling shows and eventually expand into pay-cable movies....Monday night edition of PRIME TIME pre-empted by the Westminster Dog Show, which some say is a subsidiary of the WWF. The late-night edition did air Wednesday at 1 a.m.

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Another View**SI BITES TITAN**

NEW YORK----SPORTS ILLUSTRATED has joined the ranks of publications challenging the taste of the WWP Sgt. Slaughter-as-Iraqi angle.

In the SCORECARD section of its Feb. 11 issue, SI writer Steve Wulf quoted WWP p.r. chief Steve Planamenta as saying, "People are blowing this thing out of proportion. It's true that five weeks ago, we were playing up the Iraqi angle but as the world scene changed, we have changed also." Speaking about the NBC THE MAIN EVENT special, Planamenta added, "There will be no mention of Iraq tonight. I hope you see that it was done in good taste."

Wulf wrote: "Although there was no mention of Iraq by name in the NBC event, Slaughter clearly identified himself with the Iraqi cause when he dared the TV audience to 'form coalitions to stop me.'" Wulf described the finish of the Slaughter-Duggan match: "Hulk Hogan, who is scheduled to face Slaughter for the WWP title at WRESTLEMANIA VII...then helped Duggan to his feet and waved the American flag. Good taste?"

MORE DECEPTION?: Randy Savage's surgery will apparently keep him idled until WM7. But he continues to be advertised as Ultimate Warrior's opponent across the country when Titan clearly knows Savage won't be there.

THE REAL STORY: I have from two good authorities that Titan had only sold 12,000 paid admissions to the L.A. Coliseum. Every figure I'd been told from 37,000 to 60,000 was strictly a work. Freebies swelled it to about 20,000.

TANAKA'S BACK: Pat Tanaka already back working. His knee did not require the scope but in his absence, Bob Bradley was used under a mask and called "Pat Tanaka."

AFTER WM7: It appears Warrior-Undertaker will be a key matchup. Some talk, as well, of a Steamboat-Hennig series over the I-C belt.

THE WORD FROM HERD: Jim Herd called CLASH XIV "one of our worst shows, as it relates to amenities. The Georgia Mountain Center only allows you a short runway and we had several entrances disintegrate on us."

BORNE AS JOSH: Matt Borne as Big Josh is being portrayed as a "friend of Tommy Rich."

TOO EARLY?: Herd says published reports of Billy Jack Haynes and Nikita Koloff, among others, as being already in WCW are premature. "We've had about 80 guys call in here wanting to work. I saw Haynes in the office the other day and I know Dusty's talked to Nikita. But none of these have been brought to me to talk money. Until they are, they're not in."

PHOENIX STORY: As of Thursday, 2,000 tickets had been sold for WRESTLE WAR in the 13,000 seat Phoenix arena. But Herd says arena booker C.M. Crist insists he'll sell it out. "He better hope he does," says Herd, "because he's paid a percentage of PAID tickets, so it's not in his interest to paper it."

DUSTIN DEBUTS: Dustin Rhodes made his WCW redebut last

Monday at TV.

NO GORDY: Herd also squashed another published report on Terry Gordy's returning to WCW. "We don't have any desire to bring him in," said Herd, "unless he changes his attitude."

NO BUZZ: And Buzz Sawyer is definitely not going to be a full-timer. Says Herd: "Buzz got a pop on the West Coast but fan reaction was not good to his guys in preliminary bouts. Plus, you can't fly him back and to from California."

HERD VS. THE SHEETS: No joke. It's a working idea for a special night on THE WRESTLING HOTLINE with the WCW boss taking on me and other newsletter editors. Lance Russell and Herd are kicking the idea around. I get the sneaking idea Jim would enjoy this and so would I.

WAR AND BUDGETS: War coverage is sending CNN \$3 million a month over budget. Every department of TBS, including WCW, is being pressed to keep budgets tight because of it.

EDDIE'S BACK: The USWA/WMC show Saturday was tremendous. Eddie Gilbert's return last Monday at the Mid-South Coliseum has found a much blonder Eddie. He and Lawler had a grudge match Monday night with Jeff Jarrett-Steve Austin for the Southern title.

ALSO MONDAY: New Kids vs. Terrence Garvin/Eli the Eliminator, Danny Davis-Steven Dane, Tom Prichard-Cody Michaels, Eric Embry-Jerry Lynn, Bill Dundee-Brian Lee, and Doug Gilbert/Tony Anthony vs. U.S. Males rounded out the card.

THE LAST CORNETTE: Jerry Jarrett decided to end the program with the Fabulous Ones and Cornette a month early. It was costing too much to bring in the Fabs & Corny. Memphis houses declined from \$7,500 to \$4,400 in three weeks.

GREYHOUND TONIGHT: Here's a good one. Jarrett's crew bussed from Tennessee to Dallas to tape Friday night and reportedly rode all night to Memphis in time for the live Saturday a.m. show on WMC.

HERB VS. THE 900s: Big dispute between Herb Abrams (UWF) and Ric Carter and Mike Sawyer of LIVE WRESTLING TALK, the 900 hotline of Audio Communications, Inc. (ACI also handles WCW and UWF hotlines). A woman caller asked about Ric's and Mike's opinions of the UWF. When the topic came around to the alleged bounced checks some UWF guys reportedly received, Ric and Mike discovered they were talking to Mrs. Herb Abrams.

THE FOLLOWUP: Herb reportedly decried their info as false and wants an apology from Ric and Mike and ACI. According to Carter, Abrams made a thinly veiled threat of a suit if no apology comes. Ric and Mike stand by their story but an ACI exec, fearing loss of Herb's 900 line, may order an apology.

GUEST SHOT: I'll be guesting for an hour with Ric and Mike Feb. 20 at 10 p.m. EST (1-900-370-2088).

JAMES BROWN CORNY: If you get LPWA, you have to see Cornette's LOUISVILLE SLUGGER with Bugaloo Brown. Jim sings "I Feel Good" and impersonates Don Cornelius.

ASSORTED STUFF: The annuals HAVE been mailed and except for late orders, I hope they're in your hands this week. You may STILL order. Also, thanks to all my new UWF results contributors. Please keep the postcards coming!

MATWATCH

Page 6

Vol. 4, No. 6/Feb. 11-17

PRIME TIME NUDGES WCW

In a crowded week after network and cable specials, USA Network's PRIME TIME WRESTLING barely edged TBS' WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING as the week's top-rated cable show.

PTW posted a 2.9 rating (up 26% from the previous week) and 4.4 per cent share of audience for its show headlined by highlights from the NBC MAIN EVENT and Tugboat-Dino Bravo and Tito Santana-Koko B. Ware matchups.

That nosed out WCW, which scored a 2.8/5.3, a 17% increase, for its Barry Windham/Arn Anderson vs. Brad Armstrong/Tim Horner topline and El Gigante-Ric Flair angle.

WCW MAIN EVENT, which offered a Tom Zenk-Terry Taylor topper and clips of the Anderson TV title win over Zenk, registered a 2.7/5.1, a 21% jump from two weeks ago.

ALL-AMERICAN WRESTLING fell from the top to fourth with a 2.4/6.4, down 23%. WCW's POWER HOUR dipped slightly to a 1.6/5.3 for its Anderson-Eaton main event.

CABLE

Week Ending Feb. 4	Rating	Share	Total Homes
WWF PRIME TIME (USA 2/4)	2.9	4.4	1.58 million
WCW WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP (TBS 2/2)	2.8	5.3	1.57 million
WCW MAIN EVENT (TBS 2/3)	2.7	5.1	1.51 million
WWF ALL-AMERICAN (USA 2/3)	2.4	6.4	1.31 million
WCW POWER HOUR (TBS 2/2)	1.6	5.3	896,000

STEVE BEVERLY

(Continued from Page 1)

see viewers sending a message to the networks and the big two promotions as we have suggested for two years now: there is simply too much wrestling on television. Not enough of it is special. The main event of THE MAIN EVENT didn't matter. A story as controversial as Vince McMahon's and the biggest attraction in your field featured for more than a fourth of a show would have drawn a big audience three or four years ago.

I mildly suggested to a TBS executive last week how a pullback in the number of so-called "supercard" specials would probably be better for the entire business---ratings and arenas. The official privately agreed but said, "One group's not going to do it until the other one does and we know that's not going to happen."

No. But the 6.7 rating may be the point at which NBC gives McMahon the broom, at least from prime time, though concerns hover over SNWE's ratings erosion. Only one-half point separates the Big 3 networks in this season's ratings race. NBC, slipping this year, cannot afford specials which draw only a third of the audience of ABC. On Feb. 1, 17.7 million more viewers watched Jaleel White than Hulk Hogan.

Foremost, it suggests to me the pay-per-view buy-in for WRESTLEMANIA may not be the big bonanza we initially saw, even with red-white-and-blue and yellow ribbons thrown in for insurance. This is by far the smallest February NBC base McMahon has yet had to build a pay show. The one thing worse for the WWF than negative reax to its angle is for America to simply not care. I'm not sure this isn't the case here.

RATINGS

RAP

In Forbes Story

"RAG TEAM" MAKING BIG BUCKS PANTS

NEW YORK---Road Warriors (Legion of Doom) Joe Hegstrand and Mike Laurinidas are expanding their Zubaz clothing operation into long-lasting "quality active wear," according to the Feb. 18 issue of FORBES magazine.

Writer Vicki Contavespi profiles the venture of Hawk and Animal into a pants business which projects sales of \$20 million wholesale in its third year of existence.

Contavespi interviews Hawk's (Hegstrand's) business adviser Jim Sippi, who says, "You can only take so many body slams before it's over." Warrior Distributing Corp. is now moving into Zubaz-licensed caps, which have racked up sales of \$500,000, according to the story.

The profile ends with Hawk telling Contavespi: "It's all a show sometimes, when you're making sales pitches or whatever you're doing," he says. "I put on a wrestling face but I can put on a pretty good business face, too."

YOU SAID IT!!!

(Continued from Page 2)

Thanks for taking time to research the historical difference between how some promotions in the past used angles involving wars or hostages (well after these periods of crisis ended) compared to the questionable way in which Titan has used the Gulf War (while blood still flows) to hype sales for WRESTLEMANIA VII.

While there are probably few among us hardcore fans with the sense or courage to boycott the PPV on moral or ethical grounds, nevertheless, McMahon has run the risk of limiting potential maximum revenues from dismayed marks and families who may find real war as a backdrop to a fantasy angle simply too much to swallow.

JEFF MULLINS
PRO WRESTLING SUSHI
SAN JOSE CA

(One more week of your letters, a MATWATCH SHOPPERS NETWORK and a column on sexism in wrestling commentary in next week's MATWATCH.)

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